



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH FLORIDA

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

Department of Sociology



Sociology Department Wins Southern Sociological Society's Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award

By: Maralee Mayberry and Christina Partin

The Department of Sociology has been awarded the Southern Sociological Society's (SSS) 2016 Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award. According to the SSS, the purpose of this award is to "honor individuals, departments, schools, institutions, or other collective actors for their outstanding contributions to the teaching of sociology at the undergraduate and/or graduate level." Department Chairperson Elizabeth Aranda coordinated the nomination and solicited letters from alumni, and faculty members Maralee Mayberry and Christina Partin prepared the materials for this award on behalf of the department's Teacher Training Program. This program is designed to produce highly

qualified and self-reflective graduate students who excel at teaching Sociology in our department and at other institutions upon graduation.

The Department Teacher Training Program originally was instituted in 2001 to train M.A. level students to teach their own classes in the second semester of their second year in the Master's Program. It also provided them with teaching experience that would bolster their applications to Ph.D. programs across the country. Over time, and with the implementation of the Ph.D. program, the department remained committed to the program and found new and innovative ways to meet undergraduate and graduate
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SocioFeed

The Official Newsletter of the Department of Sociology at the University of South Florida

**Volume 3, Issue 1
April 2016**

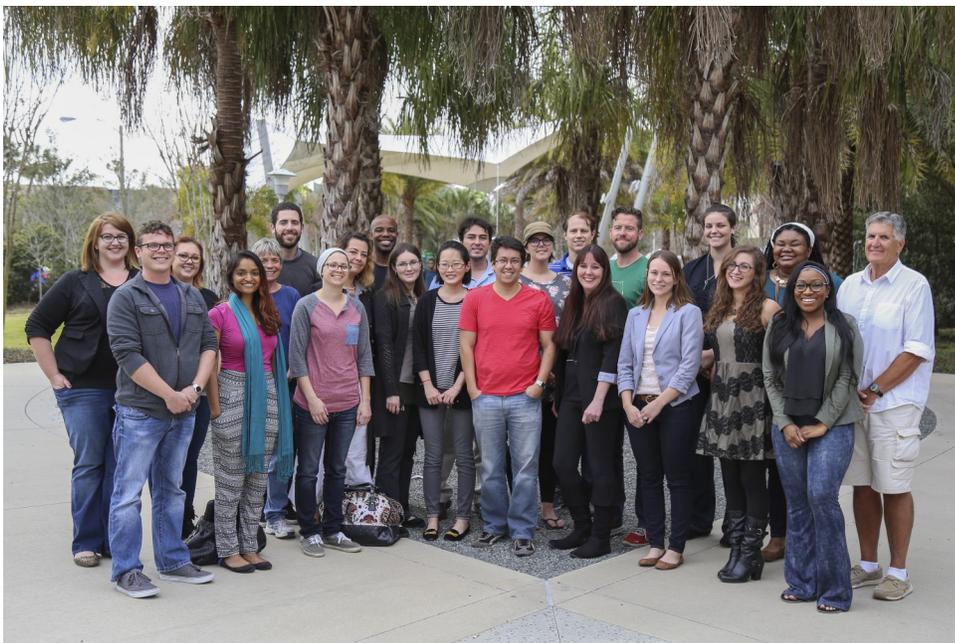
Welcome to Our Department!

Dr. Julia Meszaros joined the Department last fall as one of the Provost's Post-Doctoral Scholars

Dr. Quincy Edwards joined the Department as a Visiting Instructor in the ISS Program.

Dr. Brenda Mason earned her Ph.D. from our Department last summer and joined us as a Visiting Instructor.

Teaching Assistants pose for picture with founders of the TA Training Program, Maralee Mayberry and Christina Partin, and Faculty Mentor Erica Toothman.



Career Moves

- Post-Doctoral Scholar **Dr. Sinem Adar** accepted a two year position at the Lichtenberg-Kolleg's Early Career Fellowship Programme at the University of Gottingen in Germany.
- **Dr. Elizabeth Aranda** was promoted to the rank of Full Professor.
- **Dr. Shawn Bingham** accepted the position of Assistant Dean of the Honors College.
- **Dr. James Cavendish** will begin his term as Chair of the Department this fall.
- **Dr. Sara Crawley** became Director of Graduate Studies.
- **Ms. Sheela Fernandez** was promoted to Academic Services Administrator in the College of Arts & Sciences.
- **Dr. Sara Green** is the new Director for the Interdisciplinary Social Sciences Program.
- **Mr. Brandon Kroll**, ISS Advisor, was promoted to Senior Academic Advisor II in the College of Arts & Sciences.

Announcements

- **Internship opportunities:** internships allow students to gain practical experience in an area where they acquired expertise through their course work. Courses such as Disability and Society, Consumer Culture, Identity and Community, Race and Ethnic Relations, and Sociology of Education are feeder courses for internships. They are typically directed by Drs. Green, Graham, Aranda, and Mayberry respectively. In AY 2014-2015, 12 students participated in semester long internships. For more information please contact Dr. Mayberry.

Calling All Alumni...

- The Department of Sociology is working to create an alumni organization involving former Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences Majors. Please email us if you are interested in joining. We hope to have an event this fall where we can convene and share business cards. Email SOC-Alumni@usf.edu for more information and please keep us informed of your accomplishments.

Sociologists Engage in Strategic Planning



The Department held its annual retreat last fall in the ISA Building. Dr. Elizabeth Aranda will be stepping down as chair and Dr. James Cavendish will be the Department's new chair come August.

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Distinguished Contributions to Teaching

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student needs in the changing context of higher education. The program now includes a graduate-level Teaching Sociology Course, experience as a Teaching Assistant with guided mentorship from our faculty, opportunity to teach courses as the Instructor of Record with guided mentorship from the department's Director of Pedagogy, involvement in mentorship as Teaching Associate Mentors, development of a holistic teaching portfolio and statement of teaching philosophy, and opportunity to engage with and develop the scholarship on teaching and learning (SoTL) by using their courses as a site in which to conduct research on effective pedagogy and student learning.

Maralee Mayberry describes the Teacher Training Program as taking a "holistic approach" to teaching. It is clear that current and former participants of this program would agree. As word spread that the department was assembling the nomination for this award, many offered to write letters of recommendation in support of the nomination. Dr. Hilary Dotson, Data Scientist at the Center for Human Capital Innovation (Ph.D., 2014) praises the impact the program has had on her current career—"I continue to use much of what I learned through USF's stellar pedagogical training—whether I

am training a new Research Assistant or providing constructive feedback to my colleagues as they prepare their own training seminars." Jarin Eisenberg, Executive Director of Melbourne Main Street and Instructor at Florida Institute of Technology, (M.A., 2009) credits the program with a personal impact—"In the Teaching Sociology course I learned lessons that have fundamentally impacted how I carry myself in the world. The instructor shared a piece of advice about teaching that has stayed with me ever since: reflect, reflect, reflect, and then reflect some more. This made me evaluate and question each lecture I gave, the information I included, and how I delivered the message. Instead of looking to the students as to why something didn't go as planned or performance on an exam was poor, I looked at how I was preparing the students." Nina Venter (current M.A. student and incoming Ph.D. student), reflects on her trajectory as a teacher—"I did not enter graduate school with the idea that I might one day become a teacher of any kind. Yet, after completing the Teaching Sociology course, I'm excited by the prospect...It is in this course that I discovered the absolute necessity of a sociological imagination to teach sociology in a way that might allow students to make a connection between course content and their own lived experiences... as a Teaching Assistant and with guidance and

mentorship from the lead instructor, I had the opportunity to lead a class session...what should have been a terrifying experience turned out to be a welcome initiation to teaching sociology, one that proved to me that teaching sociology is just as exciting as doing sociology." Dr. Robert Potter, Associate Dean of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies also wrote a letter in support of this nomination. In his letter, he commends the program and notes, "Beyond the expected strong research focus in sociology the pedagogical and mentoring skills developed are second to none. I have used this graduate program as a model to be emulated throughout our diverse college." Many additional letters from alumni and students echoed these sentiments.

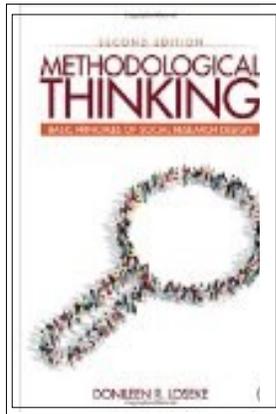
Upon hearing the news that SSS bestowed the Distinguished Contributions to Teaching Award to the USF Sociology's Teacher Training Program, Christina Partin's first reaction was to give thanks to the graduate students the program is intended to serve. "Without the enthusiasm and dedication of our graduate students, the Teacher Training Program could not be successful. Having the opportunity to provide mentorship to these folks is an honor and a privilege—and helping them transition from students to colleagues is the most rewarding part of my work."

The Sociology Department is honored to receive this prestigious award, but co-founders Mayberry and Partin assert that their work is not finished. Mayberry says, "We are highly motivated to continue infusing the program with new innovations and ideas." Perhaps some of those ideas will come from their participation at the Southern Sociological Society's Annual Meetings. In April, Mayberry and Partin will travel to the conference in Atlanta to accept the award on behalf of the department.

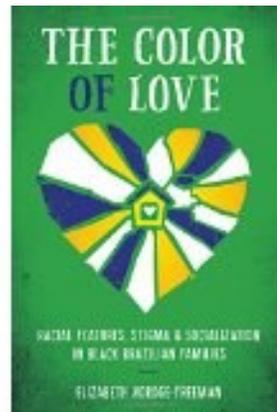


M.A. Teaching Assistants meeting with Faculty Mentor Christina Partin and Ph.D. Mentor Pangri Mehta. (From left to right): Pangri Mehta, Jessie Altice, Joy Fuller, Monica Heimos, Christina Partin, Melinda Maconi, Manny Ramirez, Olivia Johnson, Diamond Briggs, and Nina Venter.

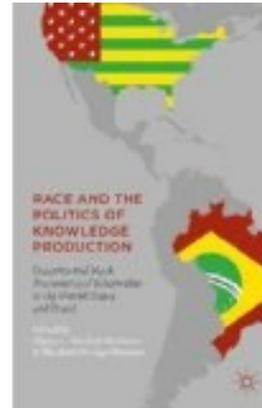
Faculty Books



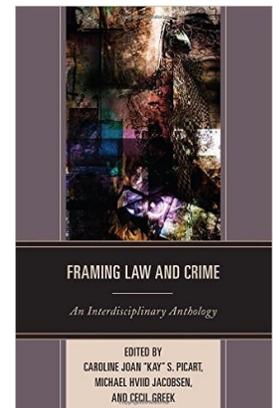
Donileen Loseke published the second edition of *Methodological Thinking: Basic Principles of Research Design*. Sage Publications, 2016.



Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman published, *The Color of Love: Racial Features, Stigma, and Socialization in Black Brazilian Families*. University of Texas Press, 2015.



Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman co-edited, (with G. Mitchell-Walthour) *Race and The Politics of Knowledge Production: Diaspora and Black Transnational Scholarship in the United States and Brazil*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.



Cecil Greek co-edited (with C. Picart and M. Jacobsen) *Framing Law and Crime: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2016.

Drs. Friedman and Graham Receive Grant For Service Learning Course

Dr. Friedman and Dr. Graham were awarded a Service Learning High Impact Practice Course Development Research Grant by the Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships in April 2015. They used this grant for their Fall 2015 semester Sociological Research Experience course in which 11 undergraduate students worked together as members of a research team on the “Managing Family Food Consumption” project. Students and faculty conducted interviews with parents and children, and then worked collectively to organize and analyze information using a grounded theory approach, with each student analyzing a unique research question. The research site was the Temple Terrace Recreation Center, and the team targeted each family’s main food preparer (usually a parent) and a “tween” child (between the ages of 8-15) for interviews to learn how subjects manage the job of feeding the family in an age when families are so busy, in particular, with extra-curricular athletic activities at the recreation center. This project will culminate in a power point presentation to be given

at the Temple Terrace Board of Directors within the upcoming year followed by published papers and eventually a book. The project’s findings will assist the Temple Terrace Recreation Center in improving their food-related programming and in better understanding the needs and interests of their diverse clientele when it comes to scheduling of activities. Over the past two years, this ongoing research has brought great dividends for our students, providing the data for one M.A. thesis, nine undergraduate Honors theses, four conference

paper presentations, and several additional student papers. In April 2016, five of these students will present their work at the 2016 Undergraduate Research and Arts Colloquium at USF. The project gives students great first-hand experience with data collection and analysis which is preparing them for graduate work: among past and current undergraduate participants in this project, eight students have been admitted to competitive graduate programs.



Faculty Awards, Publications & Service

Congratulations to the following faculty for their accomplishments and service to the University and the Sociology communities. The following are just some out of many faculty successes:

- **Drs. Elizabeth Aranda and Elizabeth Vaquera** published “Racism, the Immigration Enforcement Regime, and the Implications for Racial Inequality in the Lives of Undocumented Young Adults,” in the inaugural issue of the ASA’s new journal, *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*.
- **Dr. Shawn Bingham** delivered the 2015 “Last Lecture” sponsored by Housing and Residential Education.
- **Dr. Jim Cavendish** completed his third year as Executive Officer of the Association for the Sociology of Religion.
- **Dr. Sara Crawley** was appointed to the Editorial Board of the journal, *Krytyka Feministyczna*, a Ukrainian journal of feminist critical theory.
- **Dr. Emelda Curry** co-authored the article, “Diversity Dilemmas and Opportunities: Training the Next Generation of Anthropologists” in the journal *Public Anthropology*.



Two faculty from Sociology were featured in last fall’s TEDx USF talks focusing on the theme, “Challenging What Is.” Dr. Sara Crawley presented on the topic, “We are all Trans” and Dr. Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman discussed “The Color of Love.” You can see these talks on the Department’s YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgUXYqCaxjyQGm0U55ZmKdw>



- **Drs. Laurel Graham and Jenny Friedman** were awarded a grant from AETNA to fund a portion of their community engaged research project that involves the Tampa Heights Junior Civic Association.
- **Drs. Cecil Greek and Laurel Graham** (with Lena Young and Alexis Lewis) led a workshop on “Inadvertent Activism” during the 18th IBL Symposium (photo above).
- **Dr. Sara Green** was elected chair of the American Sociological Association Section, Disability in Society (2016-2017).
- **Dr. Elizabeth Hordge-Freeman** was awarded a Fulbright and a McKnight Junior Faculty Fellowship to support her research in Brazil. She also received an ASA Advancement of the Discipline Research Grant. Last year she was awarded the Women in Leadership and Philanthropy USF-System Wide Junior Faculty Award, and most recently she received USF’s Black Heritage Month Award for Outstanding Faculty.
- **Dr. David Jacobson** was quoted in the *New York Times* regarding violence against women in wartime in a 2015 article, “UN Issues Grim Report on Sexual Violence as Weapon of War.” He was also interviewed on PBS Newshour about the situation of women and sexual slavery under ISIS, and for *La Croix*, one of the three leading newspapers in France, on the conflict with Boko Haram in Nigeria.
- **Dr. Margrethe Kusenbach** completed her term as President of the Society for the Study of Symbolic Interaction (SSSI). She was also Guest Professor in the International Summer School for Urban Ethnography at the University of Trento, Italy.
- **Dr. Donileen Loseke** was awarded the 2015 Mentor Excellence Award from the Society of the Study for Symbolic Interaction. She is also President-Elect of the Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP).
- **Dr. Maralee Mayberry** was elected Chair of the Society for the Study of Social Problems’ Educational Problems Division (2015-17). She also published (with L. Hanson) “Barriers to Gay-Straight Alliance Social Activism: An Assessment Model for Education Researchers and Practitioners” in the *Journal of Sociology and Social Work*.
- Affiliate faculty **Dr. Khary Rigg** was awarded the 2015 Junior Scholar Award by the American Sociological Association’s Section on Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco.
- **Dr. John Skvoretz** co-authored (with T. Opsahl and F. Agneessens) an article in the journal, *Social Networks*, that is among the top 5 most cited papers in Sociology (2010-2014) as reported by the ASA publication, *Footnotes*. He also published a paper that received an Honorable Mention from the International Network for Analytical Sociology’s Robert K. Merton Analytical Sociology Best Paper Award. He is also Co-PI on a 3-year NSF “Big Data” Award.
- **Dr. Will Tyson** was awarded an NSF grant to fund his study, Path-TechLIFE: A National Survey of LIFE (Learning, Interests, Family, and Employment) Experiences Influencing Pathways into Advanced Technologies.

Graduate Student Accomplishments & Service

Congratulations to the following graduate students for their accomplishments and service. Below are some examples:

- **Jasmon Bailey** and mentor Dr. John Skvoretz had their paper, “Red, White, Yellow, Blue, All Out But You’: Status Effects on Team Formation, An Expectation States Theory” accepted for publication in *Social Psychology Quarterly*. Mr. Bailey also was the recipient of USF’s Black Heritage Month Award for Academic Excellence.



Dr. Brenda Mason defended her dissertation last summer. In the photo above she is with her doctoral committee. (From left to right): Cheryl Hall, Brenda Mason, Laurel Graham, Margarethe Kusenbach, and Donileen Loseke.



Monica Heimos (under Dr. Emelda Curry’s mentorship) successfully defended her MA thesis.

- **Maggie Cobb** received a USF Dissertation Fellowship.
- **Damien Contessa** successfully defended his dissertation, “Unraveling the Wild: A Cultural Logic of Animal Stories in Contemporary Social Life.” He will be awarded his Ph.D. degree in May.
- **Katie Cooper, Pangri Metha, and Mary Catherine Whitlock** each received an award of \$500 from the Department’s 2015 Annual Research Grant competition.
- **Jennifer Earles** had a paper

accepted for publication in *Gender & Education* titled, “Reading Gender: A Feminist, Queer Approach to Children’s Literature and Children’s Discursive Agency.”

- **Justine Egner** co-authored the article, “It Has No Color, It Has No Gender, It’s Gender Bending’: Gender and Sexuality Fluidity and Subversiveness in Drag Performance” in the *Journal of Homosexuality* (2015).
- **Pangri Mehta** authored the article, “India’s Delusions of Gender Grandeur: Why India has One of the Highest Rates of Gender-Based Discrimination in Developing Countries” to the *Asia & The Pacific Policy Society*.



Damien Contessa with co-chairs Dr. Robert Benford and Dr. Laurel Gra-

- M.A. student **Wenonah (Nina) Venter** completed a Graduate Certificate in Community Development.
- Ph.D. Student **Mary Catherine Whitlock** was awarded the Duke University Archival Travel Grant (\$1,000).
- **Mary Catherine Whitlock** and **Justine Egner** were appointed co-chairs of the Student Concerns Summer Workshop, Roundtable Organizing Committee for the Sociologists for Women in Society.
- M.A. Students **Jessie Altice, Carley Geiss, Monica Heimos, Melinda Maconi, and Wenonah (Nina) Venter** successfully defended their M.A. theses and all will graduate this May. Altice, Geiss, Maconi, and Venter applied to USF Sociology’s Ph.D. program and were accepted. They will begin this fall.

Sociologists Display Team-Based Approach to Teaching at ATLE’s Celebration of Teaching Conference

Congratulations to our M.A. students involved in our Training Program, their Faculty Mentor, Christina Partin, and Ph.D. Mentor Pangri Mehta who participated in USF’s Celebration of Teaching Conference. Their presentation was titled, “A Team-Based Approach to GTA Teaching.”



(From left to right): Toria Kwan, Olivia Johnson, Manny Ramirez, Pangri Mehta, Joy Fuller, Christina Partin, Melinda Maconi, Nina Venter, Jessie Altice, Monica Heimos, and Carley Geiss.

Undergraduate Student Scholarships and Awards

This academic year the Sociology Department awarded scholarships to four students and Outstanding Senior Awards to three.

The recipients of this year's Wallace Scholarship are: Janae Aragosa, Olivia Fleming, Ricky Scheiber-Camoretti, Meischa Sineno, and Shawntel Williams.

Janae Aragosa is working on a concentration in Inequality and Social Justice. She wants to do advocacy work in this area when she graduates. Olivia Fleming was recently admitted into the Department's M.A. Program. She would like to continue her research on social problems in urban communities and ultimately pursue her Ph.D. focusing on issues related to urban planning. Ricardo Scheiber-Camoretti will be a Summer Analyst for Citibank's Global Program Management Office where he plans to prepare for a career in project management, although he also is interested in pursuing a law degree. He stated, "What I am sure about is that I plan on utilizing my sociology degree in all my endeavors. The sociological imagination has taught me to see the world through a diverse array of lenses and I will never stop this practice." Meischa Sineno is planning to apply to Ph.D. programs that will allow her to pursue her research interests in race relations. Shawntel Williams is pursuing a concentration in Identity and Community. Williams plans to join the Peace Corp upon graduation in the hopes of working in youth development in her home country of the Philippines. She plans to eventually become a doctor specializing in oncological surgery.

This year's Outstanding Senior Award went to three students. Lauren Dunayer and Jonathan Ware are Sociology majors and Amanda Rio is an ISS major.

After graduation, Lauren Dunayer would like to run a non-profit organization that will "help those that can't



Amanda Rio accepts the award for ISS Outstanding Senior presented to her by Dr. Sara Green, Director of the ISS Program.

take care of themselves and their children." She says that her organization will "spark newfound hope in their lives similar to that which the USF Sociology department has already given me." Jonathan Ware would like to get his Ph.D. in Sociology and research the experiences of youth that identify as racial and sexual minorities. He also would like to teach and mentor students, "offering them the type of guidance and mentoring I received while studying sociology at USF." Last, Amanda Rio was accepted into the University of Notre Dame's Graduate School Summer Research Opportunity Program. After graduation she would like to work and volunteer at a mental health facility or substance abuse rehabilitation center. She also is interested in pursuing a Masters Degree in Mental Health and Policy at USF. She says, "My ISS major has... educated me to open my eyes and look at the world in a multidisciplinary sense... [it] has really enlightened my view of the world... I'm extremely thankful for my time here at USF in the ISS Program because I would not be who I am today without it."

Last year the Wallace Scholarship was offered to three outstanding students, Matt Moschell, Jonathan

Students Present Their Research at 2016 Undergraduate Research and Arts Colloquium

On April 6, undergraduates presented the outcomes of their research to hundreds of Colloquium attendees. The following students represented the Sociology Department with pride:

Chelsea Ashe, "Sacrificial Moments: Couples Bonding Through Food." (Mentors: Dr. Graham & Dr. Friedman)

Matthew Bresnahan, "Branded Food, Branded Families: Performance and Authenticity in Everyday Food Decisions." (Mentors: Dr. Graham & Dr. Friedman)

Alexis Lewis, "Lifting the Veil on Supermom: How Mothers Reconcile Family Food Ideals with Reality." (Mentors: Dr. Graham & Dr. Friedman)

Robert McDonald, "Fathers, Food & Families: Balancing the Full Plate." (Mentors: Dr. Graham & Dr. Friedman)

Amanda Rio, "Examining Relationships in Which One Partner Has a Mental Illness Using Photovoice." (Mentor: Dr. Curry)

Meischa Sineno, "Undocumented Brazilian Gender Identities and Negotiations of American Manhood." (Mentor: Dr. Aranda)

Xamil Vega, "Practice of Sugar Management Within the Family." (Mentors: Dr. Graham & Dr. Friedman)

Ware, and Roshard Williams. All of these students have a track record of substantive service and working on social justice projects. The Department is immensely proud of these fine students and will honor them at this year's Awards Banquet to be held on April 8th.

Inadvertent Activism: A Personal Account

By: Cecil Greek

If you had asked me 18 months ago whether I would be personally involved in a campaign to save neighborhoods from urban highway expansion, I probably would've said that it wasn't very likely. However, today I find myself very involved in a form of activism I primarily had only read about in the academic literature. The brief account below is my own personal story, but also involves other faculty, students, and concerned community members.

The story begins with the Department's Community Engagement Committee's choice to partner with the Tampa Heights Junior Civic Association (THJCA). The Community Engagement Committee, under chair Emelda Curry, was itself newly formed and looking for one community NGO with whom we could partner. The Tampa Heights organization seemed perfect: a long-established organization mentoring youth, with a refurbished multipurpose facility nearing completion, an urban garden project, and plans for a number of new program initiatives. The possibilities for engaged research and potential internships involving faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students seemed limitless. Visiting the facility with director Lena Young, we learned it would have a music recording studio, a state-of-the-art computer lab, a library, and a working kitchen to teach restaurant skills. Over a million dollars in funds had been raised from sponsors, and hundreds of hours of free labor provided to prepare the facility.

There was only one thing standing in the way; the facility was still being refurbished. So, the Community Engagement Committee sponsored a series of Saturday morning sojourns to Tampa Heights which included painting, electrical wiring, and other renovation type activities. In the nearby urban garden a plan for an aquaponics greenhouse was also taking shape, and some Saturdays were spent working on building it. However, it became evident rather quickly that work on these things was taking place rather slowly, and the date for the official opening of the new facilities con-



tinued to slide into the future. As I personally have no fix-it skills, I decided that my involvement might best be to become the visual historian of the project. I started photographing what faculty and students and community residents were doing together, including progress being made on the building, what was going on in the garden, and, to better contextualize the project, expanding to what the neighborhood around the facility looks like. A significantly large mixed group of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students largely from the Sociology Club were coming on Saturdays.

Then two things happened almost simultaneously: I was asked to chair the Community Engagement Committee; and, suddenly the future of the THJCA's new facility was facing possible demolition from a newly introduced plan to expand dramatically the current footprint of I-4 and I-275 as these interstates run through the heart of Tampa. The new highway plan, now commonly called TBX, promised to fix many of Tampa's worst traffic nightmares and provide a higher-speed toll road alternative that would help rush-hour drivers avoid much of the everyday congestion. As the THJCA's building backs to the current interstate, it would either have to be demolished or moved as part of the expansion. The urban garden space would be lost as well: two of our faculty, Laurel Graham and Jennifer Friedman,

had already obtained a grant that focused on the garden and related food issues in the community. This grant was now at issue as well.

At that point, I, along with several faculty members and some students, now started attending the Metropolitan Planning Organization's meetings. It was fascinating to see the zeal with which citizens showed up to these meetings to protest the highway expansion plans, as they perceived the plan would bring about significant damage to urban neighborhoods along the interstate, particularly in Tampa Heights, Seminole Heights, and Ybor City. Lena Young and her organization became part of the story itself, as community inspectors came in and ordered THJCA to stop refurbishing the facility and shut down construction of the greenhouse. The local Columbia restaurant even pulled their funding for the state-of-the-art teaching kitchen that they had promised to put inside the new facility, claiming they had been misled by the organization. A newspaper editorial even suggested that Ms. Young and THJCA stop protesting the highway expansion or risk so alienating the organization from the community they would get no further support. What had started as a "feel-good" opportunity for faculty and students to work with a community organization had now turned into a full-blown political struggle, and it might be necessary to choose sides.

Inadvertent Activism (cont'd. from the previous page)

At this point I wasn't convinced that the highway project could be stopped, or that there wouldn't be a significant improvement to driving around Tampa, but I continued to participate in the growing protest meetings and activities. On one level, I saw this as a continuation of my visual sociology project on the partnership between THJCA and USF Sociology, but now the focus would be on protesters and politics, as well as depicting the historic sites in the communities that might be destroyed. But, not surprisingly, the more I became "involved" in such activities, the more I internalized the feelings and motivations of those involved in the movement. I now wanted to see them win. Isn't that what praxis is? In addition, I started reading historical accounts of cities (such as San Francisco and New York) that had been able to stop urban transit projects and save historic neighborhoods, learned of the history of the destruction of Tampa

neighborhoods which had resulted from previous interstate expansions, and visited websites of cities that had shifted from reliance on highways to more multimodal transportation systems. All of this was inspiring, perhaps urban highway sprawl wasn't inevitable.

What could the Community Engagement Committee do to enlighten as many as possible to what was happening? Working with the Sociology Club, the USF Office of Community Engagement and Partnerships, and the community organizations like Stop TBX, a series of three panel discussions were planned. The first, which took place in February, was aimed at students. A second to be held on April 12, includes a panel of experts on urban renewal and transportation



issues, and is aimed at faculty, students, and community members. A third panel in late April or early May will be held in the community itself, perhaps at the THJCA facility that is in question. (Recently, a state legislative appropriation was authorized to move the facility as a way of saving it.) Where this will end is not yet known. The MPO meets again in June to again reconsider TBX.

Where Can You Visit Cuba in Tampa?

By: Dr. Margarethe Kusenbach

The main objective of my upper division course "Urban Life" is to help students understand that, and how, place matters in social life. Cities and neighborhoods create structures and cultures that influence who we are, what goals we pursue, which opportunities and barriers we encounter. One strategy toward developing this understanding is studying the origins, history, and current places of Tampa. In small teams or by themselves, students work on a semester-long project: a portrait of a Tampa Bay neighborhood of their choice, researched through observations, interviews, Census data, and other secondary sources. We explore Tampa's early history through readings, films, discussions, and a fieldtrip to Ybor City.

The fieldtrip includes a guided tour of the Ybor City Museum and nearby reconstructions of cigar workers' homes ("casitas"). Afterwards, we visit important Ybor City landmarks on foot, such as the buildings of the Cuban, Italian, and Spanish Mutual Aid Societies, the former Labor Union, remaining cigar

factories, and the Columbia restaurant. This year, Adolfo Lagomasino, Ph.D. student in USF Communication, shared his deep knowledge of José Martí Park, another landmark dedicated to the legendary fighter for Cuban independence. Few people know that this tiny piece of land on the corner of 13th Street and 8th Avenue has been owned by the Cuban government since

the 1950s, even though it is not considered political territory. Most students find it fascinating to step on Cuban land in the middle of Tampa or watch a classmate role a cigar back at the museum. Many key concepts and ideas in urban sociology can be learned hands-on, through personal experience of the places that surround us in daily life.



Undergraduate Students Attend Social Justice Organizing Conference

By: Katrina Medina (BA, Sociology, 2015)

Last spring three undergraduate Sociology majors set out on a road trip to the Social Justice Organizing Conference held in New Orleans, organized by Solidarity Ignite, (or ¡Si!) ¡Si! brings together labor and consumer groups to hold corporations accountable to uphold human rights by changing industry-wide market incentives. They work to increase transparency between workers and consumers, encourage large-scale support of fair working conditions, and pressure corporations to respect human rights on the job through real financial consequences. They are financially funded by the Alliance for Global Justice, a non-profit based in Washington, D.C.

The conference was geared towards enhancing the leadership and community organizing skills of students interested in social justice and human rights. There were several workshops that taught students how to identify and collaborate on social justice issues. The conference centered around student activism regarding on-campus campaigns but also related these movements to large-scale movements, such as the Fight for \$15, a campaign that seeks to raise the minimum wage to \$15/per hour. A panel of fast food work-

Photos Below: Jessica Fernandez and Katrina Medina at USF Graduation, 2015.



Photo (Left to Right) Katrina Medina, Rayanna Somaiah, and Jessica Fernandez at Solidarity Ignite Social Justice Conference in New Orleans, LA.

ers and advocates for the fight for a living wage and a union led a discussion on how college students are valuable allies in this fight and what students can do to start movements on their campuses and in their cities. Students discussed direct action versus education and were coached on tactics for administrative meetings with corporate leaders and university officials.

Upon returning from this conference, Senior Jessica Fernandez stated: "The conference held by Solidarity Ignite taught me way more than organizing for issue campaigns. It taught me about connections, solidarity, and respect. I learned that you do not need to be in a person's exact situation in order to em-

pathize and stand in solidarity with them to fight for their human rights." Another attendee, Junior Rayanna Somaiah shared that "a thrilling experience during the conference was taking part in a march with Fight For \$15. Throughout the march, I saw the empathy and genuine expressions that everyone carried on their faces while fighting for their rights. Being able to be a part of that captivating moment will be a lifetime memory." Senior Katrina Medina, who organized the students who attended stated that, "My time at this conference set the tone for how the rest of my semester went. I'm sure many of my professors can attest, activism became the bridge on which I related my studies to the world around me. I am immensely proud of the work I've done this semester through USAS but this fever of social justice organizing is far from subsiding. I have new directions I'd like to pursue after graduation, community organizing being one of them."

Upon returning from this conference students established a chapter of United Students Against Sweatshops here at USF. The student organization has affiliated with the national organization and joined a coalition of over 250 schools. With the guidance attained from this conference students were able to start their own collaborative efforts and create the Coalition of Bulls for Fair Labor, a student organization that has called for reform regarding the apparel sold in the campus bookstore.



Alumni Corner

Our amazing alumni are gaining meaningful employment all around the country and they also have been admitted into prestigious doctoral programs:

- **Dr. Elaina Behounek** (PhD, 2015) accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor at Mercer University.
- **Natalie Delia Deckard** (MA, 2011) will earn her PhD in Sociology from Emory University this spring. She has accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor at Davidson College.
- **Pierce Digman** (BA, 2015) was admitted to FSU's sociology PhD program and awarded a McKnight Scholarship.
- **Dr. Ilir Disha** (MA, 2005) is a Lecturer at Pace University.
- **Dr. Hilary Dotson** (PhD, 2014) accepted a position as Data Scientist at the Center for Human Capital Innovation in Washington, D.C.
- **Maria Duenas** (MA, 2015) was accepted to the PhD program in Sociology at UC-Merced with full funding.
- **Candace Goodman** (BA, 2015) is Program Director of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.
- **Katrina Medina** (BA, 2015) is the Director of Before and After Care at Channelside Academy.
- **Dr. Bryce Merrill** (MA, 2003) is Cultural Policy Director at Biennial of the Americas in Denver.
- **Gregory Mills**, (MA, 2011) is completing his Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Connecticut and has accepted a job with the U.S. Census Bureau in Washington, D.C.
- **Diana Paloma** (BA, 2014) is Match Support Specialist for Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Tampa Bay.
- **Isabel Sousa-Rodriguez** (BA, 2014) has been admitted to CUNY Graduate Center with a University Fellowship to pursue their Ph.D. in Sociology.
- **Annie Wagganer** (MA, 2005) is an Instructor at St. Louis Community College.
- **Dr. Loren Wilbers** (PhD, 2015) accepted a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

Alumnus Is Making A Difference in NYC!

Carlos Flores (BA, 2012) not only completed his major in Sociology and a Sociology Honor's Program project when he was a student at USF, but he also served as an outstanding work study assistant in the main office from 2010-2012 and as a leader in the Sociology Club. After graduating from USF, he returned to his home state of New Jersey and completed the Counseling Master's Degree Program at Montclair State University, earning a concentration in Student Affairs/Higher Education while interning at the LGBTQ Center. He is currently working as a Student Affairs Officer at Columbia University Business School, in New York City, where he advises clubs and supports community initiatives and diversity programming, focusing specifically on international students and their families. A Ph.D. may very well be in his future, as he has already begun research on the topic of resiliency and self-care among queer college students of color. Carlos recently wrote: "My sociological training has helped me become an effective social justice advocate and educator, and I hope to be able to bring this into my future work as well." Congratulations on all of your successes, Carlos!!



Interested in Giving Back?

Support our continued efforts to help fund the Department of Sociology's student scholarships, study abroad, faculty research, and programmatic needs.

Donations can be made online by visiting <http://sociology.usf.edu> and clicking on "Make A Gift," or by sending a personal check made out to the USF Foundation with Fund #420066 in the memo line and mailing it to the Office Of Development, College of Arts and Sciences, 4202 E. Fowler Ave, CPR 107, Tampa, FL 33620.

Thank you for your support!

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Our Department Keeps Growing!



Dr. Erica Toothman and Jake Hannaway welcomed Rachel Ona Hannaway (left) into the world. Doctoral student Silpa and Vijay Satheesh welcomed Advait Satheesh last fall (center)! And Dr. Elizabeth Vaquera and Steve Ressler welcomed Adrian John Ressler (right)! Congratulations to these lovely families!

